

The Nation

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The Nation

Reviews.

BURIED ALIVE.

"The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism."
By T. S. ELIOT. (Methuen. 6s. net.)

MR. ELIOT is an undertaker rather than a critic. He comes to bury Hamlet, not to praise him. He has an essay on "Hamlet and His Problems," in which he announces that, "so far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, the play is most certainly an artistic failure." Now, there are various things about "Hamlet" that call for explanation. But there is one thing that needs no explanation, and that is its "artistic failure." One might as well set out to explain why the mid-Atlantic is shallow, why Mont Blanc is smaller than Parliament Hill, why Cleopatra was not beautiful, why roses have an offensive smell. It might be possible for a writer of paradoxes to amuse himself and us on any of these themes. But Mr. Eliot is no dealer in paradoxes. He is an earnest censor of literature, who lives in the gloom of a basement, and cannot believe in the golden pomp of the sun outside. It would be unfair to say that what he is suffering from is literary atheism. He has undoubtedly gods of his own. But he worships them in the dark spirit of the sectarian, and his interest in them is theological rather than religious in kind. He is like the traditional Plymouth Brother whose belief in God is hardly so strong as his belief that there are "only a few of us"—perhaps "only one of us"—saved. We see the Plymouth-Brother mood in his reference to "the few people who talk intelligently about Stendhal and Flaubert and James." This expresses an attitude which is intolerable in a critic of literature, and should be left to *précieuses ridicules*.

Mr. Eliot, however, does not merely say that "Hamlet" is an artistic failure and leave it at that. He attempts to explain what he means. He believes with Mr. J. M. Robertson that:

"Shakespeare's 'Hamlet,' so far as it is Shakespeare's, is a play dealing with the effect of a mother's guilt upon her son, and that Shakespeare was unable to impose this motive successfully upon the 'intractable' material of the old play."

In so far as this is an attempt to explain the specifically new Shakespearian emphasis in "Hamlet," in contrast to those elements which he borrowed from an earlier play, the first part of the assertion is worth considering. But, as regards the completed play that we possess, novelties, borrowings, and all, the entire sentence gives us merely a false simplification. Shakespeare's finished "Hamlet" is a play dealing with many things besides the effect of a mother's guilt on her son. It is a play dealing with the effect of a whole circle of ruinous events closing in on a man of princely nature who was a foreigner amid such baseness, not only of soul, but of intellect. Shakespeare showed in "Hamlet" that it was possible, contrary to all the rules, to write a play which combined the largeness of a biography with essential dramatic unity. Mr. Eliot, however, clings to the idea that Shakespeare failed in "Hamlet" because he was divided in interest between the theme of the guilty mother and other intractable stuff "that the writer could not drag to light, contemplate, or manipulate into art." Now, every great work of art is like the visible part of an iceberg; it reveals less than it leaves hidden. The greatest poem in the world is no more than a page from that inspired volume that exists in the secret places of the poet's soul. There is no need to explain the mysteries that crowd about us as we read "Hamlet" by a theory of Shakespeare's failure. To summon these mysteries into the narrow compass of a play is the surest evidence of a poet's triumph. Let us see, however, how Mr. Eliot, holding to his guilty-

mother theme, attempts to explain the quality of Shakespeare's failure. He writes:—

"The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. If you examine any of Shakespeare's more successful tragedies, you will find this exact equivalence; you will find that the state of mind of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep has been communicated to you by a skilful accumulation of imagined sensory impressions; the words of Macbeth on hearing of his wife's death strike us as if, given the sequence of events, these words were automatically released by the last event in the series. The artistic 'inevitability' lies in this complete adequacy of the external to the emotion; and this is precisely what is deficient in "Hamlet."

"Hamlet (the man)," he adds, "is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear." Mr. Eliot has a curious view of the things that justify violent emotion. I should have thought that the murder of a father by his usurping brother, the infidelity of a mother and a mistress, the use of former companions to spy on him, the failure of all that had once seemed honest and fair, plots to murder him, the suicide of his beloved, might have caused considerable perturbation even in the soul of a fish. If ever there was a play in which the emotion is not in excess of the facts as they appear, that play is "Hamlet." The emotion is "in excess" only in the sense that it expresses for us not merely the personal emotion of one man, but the emotions of generation after generation of fine and sensitive spirits caught in the gross toils of disaster. Hamlet is a universal type as well as an individual. In this he resembles such a figure as Prometheus to a degree which cannot be claimed for Lear or Macbeth or Othello. That, perhaps, is the real mystery that has bewildered Mr. Eliot.

Mr. Eliot will have it, however, that Shakespeare, and not he himself, is to blame for his bewilderment. He concludes his essay:—

"We must simply admit that here Shakespeare tackled a problem which proved too much for him. Why he attempted it at all is an insoluble puzzle; under compulsion of what experience he attempted to express the inexpressibly horrible, we cannot ever know. We need a great many facts in his biography; and we should like to know whether, and when, and after or at the same time as what personal experience, he read Montaigne, II. xii, "Apologie de Raimond Sebond." We should have, finally, to know something which is by hypothesis unknowable, for we assume it to be an experience which, in the manner indicated, exceeded the facts. We should have to understand things which Shakespeare did not understand himself."

Would it be possible to write a paragraph in which there was a greater air of intellectual pursuit and a tinier reality of intellectual achievement? It would not be easy to say more essentially irrelevant things on a great subject. Mr. Eliot is like a man dissecting—and dissecting with desperate earnestness—a corpse that isn't there.

And his essays in praise have scarcely more of that vitality which is a prerequisite of good criticism than his essays in blame. He obviously admires Blake and Ben Jonson, but he leaves them as rigid and as cold as though he were measuring them for their coffins. The true critic communicates his delight in genius. His memorable sentences are the mirrors of memorable works of art. Like the poet, he is something of a philosopher, but his philosophy is for the most part implicit. He is a light-bringer by means of quotation and aphorism. He may destroy, but only in order to let in the light. His business among authors is as glorious as was the business of Plutarch among men of action. He may be primarily æsthetic, or primarily biographical, or primarily expository; but in no kind of criticism can he reach more than pedantry, unless he himself is a man of imagination, stirred by the spectacle of the strange and

noble passions of the human soul. He knows that literature is not the game of a clique, but is a fruit of the tree of life hanging from the same boughs as the achievements of lovers and statesmen and heroes. There is so little truth in Mr. Eliot's statement that "a literary critic should have no emotions except those immediately provoked by a work of art—and these . . . are, when valid, perhaps not to be called emotional at all," that one would be bound to tell ten times more truth merely by contradicting it. The ideal critic would always be able to disentangle relevant from irrelevant emotions as he studied a work of art; but in practice all critics, save a few makers of abstract laws, are human, and the rich personal experience of the critic enters into his work for good as well as evil.

Mr. Eliot fails as a critic because he brings the reader neither light nor delight. But this does not mean that he will always fail. He has some of the qualities that go to the making of a critic. He has learning, and he enjoys intellectual exercise. His essay on "Tradition and the Individual Talent" shows that he is capable of ideas, though he is not yet capable of expressing them clearly and interestingly. Besides this, as one reads him, one is conscious of the presence of a serious talent, as yet largely inarticulate, and wasting itself on the splitting of hairs and metaphysical word-spinning. His failure at present is partly a failure of generosity. If a critic is lacking in generous responsiveness it is in vain for him to write about the poets. The critic has duties as a destroyer, but chiefly in the same sense as a gold-washer. His aim is the discovery of gold. Mr. Eliot is less of a discoverer in this kind than any critic of distinction who is now writing. Otherwise he could hardly have written the sort of attack he writes here on Professor Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides, in which he overlooks the one supreme fact that calls for a critic's explanation—the fact that Professor Murray alone among English translators has (whether imperfectly or not) brought Euripides to birth as an author for the modern world. Let Mr. Eliot for the next ten years take as his patron saint the woman in the New Testament who found the piece of silver, instead of Johannes Agricola in joyless meditation. He will find her not only better company but a wiser counsellor. He may even find his sentences infected with her cheerful excitement, for want of which as yet they can break neither into a phrase nor into a smile.

ROBERT LYND.

MYSTICISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

"Essentials of Mysticism." By EVELYN UNDERHILL. (Dent. 8s. 6d. net.)

THE difficult and perplexing subject of Mysticism is often rendered still more difficult and perplexing by those who seek to elucidate it. The mystics themselves are easier to understand than their commentators. In reading a book on mysticism, we want to know exactly where our guide himself starts from, what are the presuppositions, the governing principles of his investigation. One could read a book on the subject, say, by Abbot Butler, of Downside, in complete mental comfort, with one's feet on the fender. One would know where one was, what one started from, what had to be taken for granted. There would not be the irritation and fatigue of constantly trying to seize a point of view which constantly eludes one. The theologians and the great Christian poets are intelligible, however exalted are the themes of which they treat. Take a verse of Dante:—

"Lume è lassù, che visibile face
Lo Creatore a quella creatura
Che solo in Lui vedere ha la sua pace."

"Light is on high which makes visible the Creator to that creature who only has his peace in beholding Him." Yes; one understands that; it was the common scholastic teaching, and Dante believed it. One understands Dante very well; but one sometimes finds it extremely difficult to understand Miss Underhill.

The first thing the plain man wants to know is: Is there any vital difference between Christian and non-Christian mysticism? Does the Christian mystic attain something,

possess something which the non-Christian mystic does not? Have St. John and St. Paul any advantage over Plotinus and the Sufi? Both St. John and St. Paul are constantly held up to us as shining examples of mysticism, but the peak of their mysticism rises above the mountain of their dogmatic Christianity: they would not have contemplated any other mode of ascent. The essence of their claim was its exclusiveness. To them, no doubt, Plotinus and the Sufi would have appeared men beguiled, wanderers in the desert, followers of a mirage.

At the outset Miss Underhill very accurately defines "the central fact of the mystic's experience" as "an overwhelming consciousness of God. . . . a consciousness which absorbs or eclipses all other centres of interest." But how is this consciousness to be attained? St. John the Evangelist, that prince of mystics, has a very definite answer. Miss Underhill tells us, however:—

"We may allow that the widest latitude is possible in the mystic's conception of his Deity. At best this conception will be symbolic, his experience, if genuine, will far exceed the symbols he employs. . . . Credal forms, therefore, will only be for the mystic a scaffold by which he ascends. We are even bound, I think, to confess that the overt recognition of what Christians mean by a personal God is not essential. On the contrary, where it takes a crudely anthropomorphic form the idea of personality may be a disadvantage. . . . In the highest experiences of the greatest mystics the personal category appears to be transcended. So we may say that the particular mental image which the mystic forms of his objective, the traditional theology he accepts, is not essential. . . . One cannot honestly say that there is any wide difference between the Brahman, Sufi, or Christian mystics at their best."

Miss Underhill is inclined to assign a very subordinate place to the merely "Christo-centric mystics." I notice that at the recent Church Congress she is reported as reading a paper which was "emphatic in its condemnation of the more personal forms of Christo-centric mysticism." However, she admits that Christianity, with its "incarnational philosophy," its "philosophy of Divine Incarnation dramatized in history" (by "dramatized" she apparently means "symbolized") affords a convenient starting point for the steep ascent. But by whatever road they have travelled, what is it to which the mystics have come, I mean those who (outside the New Testament) are regarded as the Masters, the mystics, Christian or non-Christian, of the type of Plotinus—Erigena, Eckhart, Jacopone in his final stage?

"Thou shalt love Him as He is," says Eckhart, "not as a God, not as a Person, not as a Spirit, not as an Image, but as a sheer, pure One. And in this One we are to sink from nothing to nothing."

Erigena declares that "the Absolute" is "beyond Being," and is "transcendent to the Trinity of Persons." Ruysbroeck had experienced three orders of reality: the natural world, the essential world, and the super-essential, where "above reason and without reason the soul is united to the absolute One." There is no need to multiply quotations; the mystics heap up terms of negation—darkness, void, nothingness—in endeavoring to describe that Absolute which they have apprehended. It may be, of course, that their apprehension had such a fullness and richness of content that in human language it could only be described negatively; but one may at least point out that their method is the very opposite of the characteristically Christian one of affirmation, that where they say "darkness" St. John says "light," and that St. John says "fullness" where they say "void." One suspects, too, sometimes that their ecstasy, or state beyond ecstasy, came in some pause of their deadening of body and mind when they forgot their weary and painful search, say, in the sight of sunshine on green fields.

The tendency of the mystics in their third stage to become definitely non-Christian is very marked.

"Jacopone," we are told, "at first uses the strongest unitive language to describe that rapturous and emotional intercourse with Divine Love which characterized his middle period; but when he at last achieves the vision of the Absolute he confesses that he was in error in supposing that it was indeed the Truth whom he had thus worshipped under veils."

Miss Underhill seems to forget that to Christians the Incarnation is not something in the world of ideas; it is something which belongs to the homely world of fact.

Christianity has no "incarnational philosophy," except the sacramental principle which proceeds from and depends upon the Incarnation. Two of her essays, for instance, are devoted respectively to that curious work, "The Mirror of Simple Souls," and the profoundly Christian and, in the truest sense, mystical book (to my own mind, after St. Paul and the Gospels, one of the very greatest works of the religious genius), the "Revelations" of the Mother Julian of Norwich. She parallels the saying of the Mother Julian, "I took Jesus for my heaven," with this passage from the inferior writer:—

"Tho' the soul had all the knowledge, love and learning that ever were given or shall be given of the Divine Trinity, it should be naught . . . for there is no other God but He which none may know, which may not be known."

Here are two sharply contradictory points of view. The first, as Miss Underhill puts it, is that "the superessential and unknowable Godhead, whose nature is but partially revealed in the Blessed Trinity, is the only substance of reality and the only satisfaction of the soul's desire." On the other hand, the Mother Julian, far from seeking to soar above the Blessed Trinity to an immediate union with the Absolute, and to some sort of knowledge of It, which can only be described as "nescience," speaks thus of the state in which she is content to abide:—

"Then I had a proffer in my reason, as if it had been friendly said to me: 'Look up to Heaven, to His Father.' And then saw I well with the faith that I felt, that there was nothing betwixt the Cross and Heaven that might have harmed me. Either behoved me to look up or else to answer. I answered inwardly with all the might of my soul: 'Nay, I may not, for Thou art my Heaven.' This I said for that I would not. For I had liefer have been in that pain till Doomsday than come to Heaven otherwise than by Him. . . . Thus was I learned to choose Jesus to my Heaven, whom I saw only in pain at that time; me liked no other Heaven but Jesus which shall be my bliss when I come there."

The ordinary traveller to heaven will find all the mysticism that he needs, I think, in St. John the Evangelist and in the Mother Julian. The lovely East Anglian school of medieval art, as we see it flowering, for instance, in the carvings of the Cathedral cloisters at Norwich, may have determined the form of her visions. But the greatness of her religious genius cannot be exaggerated. She is in a different category from saints like Gertrude, Mechtild, Angela of Foligno; more than that, she is better than Thomas à Kempis, better than St. Teresa. Among religious writers her sanity, her gaiety, her humanity, her undaunted courage and cheerfulness, her intellectual grasp and sweep, together with her untroubled submission to "the common teaching of Holy Church," are perhaps unique. She lived in the permanent faith that "all manner of things shall be well." She looked forward to the Divine Event to which the whole creation moves, of which Our Lord had told her: "Behold and see! For by the same Might, Wisdom, and Goodness that I have done all this, by the same Might, Wisdom, and Goodness I shall make well all that is not well; and thou shalt see it." This wonderful old lady died in the middle of the fifteenth century, at the age of one hundred years, more than fifty of which she spent as an anchoress strictly enclosed in a cell attached to the Church of St. Julian at Norwich. It is the grace, the distinction, the consecration of Norwich that she lived there so long.

With regard to the mystics proper—not mere "Christo-centrics" like Mother Julian—it may be, of course, that their experience is the highest attainment, the greatest achievement possible to man. One does not deny this, but to speak brutally, there is very little to show for it. By its very definition their secret is incommunicable. They cannot impart their vision to others as the poet does or the artist. To the outsider their garden appears barren and sterile. For my own part I strongly suspect that were I the "censor deputatus" of the Holy Office, Erigena, Eckhart, Tauler, Ruysbroeck, to say nothing of Boehme, would find themselves on the Index. Talking of the high courts and officials of the Church, by the way, why have no steps ever been taken towards the canonization of the Mother Julian? But the real practical mysticism is surely a very homely popular Catholicism. Paul Claudel is, in a true sense, a mystic poet. A reviewer in these columns some time back, speaking

of his poem, "La Messe Là-bas," lamented the spending of his genius on "these barren and inhuman symbols," or words to that effect. It is strange how differently things strike people; to myself the poem seems intensely human and moving. It closely follows the action of the Mass. At the "Orate Fratres," for instance, at a church in a poor quarter of Paris, the priest turns round and says: "Pray, brethren, that your sacrifice and mine may be acceptable to the Lord our God." They all have something to offer; the scanty group of the faithful who have somehow drifted there, the bankrupt tradesman who has failed in business, the young girl whose father has gambled away her *dot*, and whose lover has forsaken her, the woman with an incurable disease—all these sorrows, together with their greasy souls—are joined to the Divine Sacrifice. One sees the scene in its whole setting; all these discords are lost in a great harmony. Outside the church everything is gay in the October sun; the green leaves have turned yellow and some are falling gently. The vendors of hot chestnuts are crying their wares; the inhabitants of the *quartier* are going about their business, marketing, cooking, gossiping; they accept life, with all its sorrows, with gaiety and cheerfulness.

One wishes that mysticism of whatever sort could be turned to practical human purposes. An essential mystical thought is that of deliverance wrought out by sacrifice. One thinks of the vast tragedy and sacrifice of the war, of those countless wooden crosses in France and Flanders. To take all those crosses and make them into one Cross, a Cross on which war itself should be slain, with its misery, its slavery, its mud, its blood, just as the Church believes that death was slain upon the Cross of Calvary—here, surely, is a task worthy of the highest religious genius. We may have among us no Plotinus, no Julian, no Teresa, but such religious faculty as the twentieth century possesses could do nothing better than address itself seriously to this great mystical task.

CURÉ DE CAMPAGNE.

AN OPEN-AIR MEETING.

"Voices." Edited by THOMAS MOULT. Vol. I.: January to June, 1919. (The Voices Press, 66, Charing Cross Road.)

THE voices in this book set us thinking irresistibly of Hyde Park Corner. There is a note of rhetoric, a note of defiance. There is the orator who talks of sex and the one who talks of ethics. There is the strident voice of self-assertion, and the enthusiastic voice that talks of freedom. There are voices that denounce war and the causes of war—voices that praise the cruelty of intellectual ruthlessness. Above all, we get an impression of a high-arching blue day, and the sound of the wind in the leaves is as persistent as the excited sounds of the speakers. It is quite a good place to stop and listen, but we prefer the weather to the propaganda.

Mr. Louis Golding, to put him into the metaphor, is the chief representative of the weather. When we say this we are speaking of his verse, not of his prose. His prose is the pretty mauve—or should we say violet-tinted?—prose of the minor poet. And when to "the symphonies of the scarlet bells of pomegranates" that "are like the jangling of bells on the thighs and the hands and feet of a dusky dancer within the innermost room of the Shah" he adds the "little pigs twittering below the bounteous udders of the sow" it is not an impression of strength that we gain. We prefer our little pigs going to market or staying at home. Mr. Golding's verse, at its best, is so delightful, however, that there is no need to occupy ourselves with his prose. "Voices" would be justified in assuming the form of a book instead of a magazine by his poem "Numbers" alone. We do not know if it was "The House that Jack Built" that suggested the scheme to him. This is how it begins:—

"Three sheep graze on the low hill
Beneath the shadow of five trees
Three sheep
Five old sycamores!
(The noon is very full of sleep,
The noon's a shepherd kind and still
The noon's a shepherd takes his ease
Beneath the shadow of five trees,
Five old sycamores.) . . ."

By the end it has accumulated:—

"Fourteen shining stacks of hay,
Six owls, nine-and-twenty crows,
Fifteen hundred ancient woes,
Three sheep grazing on the hill
Beneath five sycamores,
Fat cows munching in a field
All in twos and fours. . . ."

It is a pity, we think, that Mr. Golding introduced the "father-poet" into his catalogue of charming things. It obliterates the sweetness of the hot mid-day with Harris Tweed. It prompts us to hint to the "lovely ones of lovely names" that burrs are sometimes not out of place in a bed—more certain in taking effect than a cake of soap on the top of a door. In "Bird, Bird, Bird," another of Mr. Golding's contributions, there is nothing to break the charm and exhilaration of the poem.

" . . . Bird,
Said the boy,
With the morning in his cheeks.
Bird, bird, bird, bird!
Joy!
His feathered brothers answered from the silver of their beaks,
There was lifting of bright heads and a gleam of little eyes,
And a twitter of surprise,
And a flutter of alarm. . . ."

We can even forgive Mr. Golding for rhyming "calm" with "alarm." Perhaps they really do rhyme in twentieth-century English speech. Especially worthy of praise, too, are his long poems "When the Arm of a Tree Bends Stooping" and "Shepherd Singing Ragtime." But his sublimities are continually on the edge of pitfalls, as when in "Queen Laughter" he writes:—

"When you on your road through the cities shall see a lorn
Child with a murk on its lips and a wee heart torn,
You shall empty your pockets of silver and take off your shoon,
Strip off your trousers and shirt, stand nude in the noon."

Does Mr. Golding really recommend this behavior, apart from the silver, as likely to cheer? For our part, we should view such methods with the utmost dismay.

Flight-Lieutenant F. V. Branford writes in a different vein. His is *Ercles' vein*:—

"I cast Life from me,
I handled Death,
I walked naked into lightning,
I had so great a thirst for God."

"Stygian tides," "leprous water-lanes," "the loins of Darkness," stars "whose vacant sockets brindled in live effulgence" are part of his vocabulary, and he has

" . . . thrown the dice of death with dames
Who had instructed Helen in despair."

But he can be intentionally funny, too, as when he tells us in the opening chapters of his novel:—

"My earliest recollections mainly concern my fortunes at the age of eight. Then I was just a plain, ordinary, little lad, fond of smoking cigarettes, and thrashing girls, fighting with boys I abominated; and when differences of opinion arose it was my custom to avail myself of an extraordinary swiftness of foot, except, perhaps, on occasions when I got hold of a thoroughly little fellow. . . . I must, also, have possessed enormous physical strength. At least I hit Katie Collins such a bang in the eye that she respected me for ten years afterwards."

We do not know if it is as a conscious part of his burlesque of autobiographical novels, the author of one of which recently tells a story that is to be found in Walpole's *Letters* as if it were an original invention, that Mr. Branford introduces the story on page 85. There is otherwise no justification for its appearance in deliberate print, we think. His own fund of facetiousness is large enough to supply him with amusing things, as when he finds himself confronted with the Public School System and feels "like a puppy about to bite the Nelson Monument."

Mr. Thomas Moulton, whose is the guiding hand in this group of writers, also contributes some chapters from a novel in which the hero breaks the ice on his bath:—

"And I laughed back to my soul that the day was indeed good, albeit, having seen naught beyond the pale yellow range of candle-flame, and knowing with no certainty that there was a day anywhere at all."

That sort of thing makes us rejoice that love of nature, introspection, and baths were not fashionable in the days of Pepys. We feel no desire to accompany Mr. Moulton's hero through the rest of his day—not even though he clothed him

quickly, bethinking himself in an afterthought of last night's mistletoe. Not even though one of his cows was named rather unexpectedly Marie Antoinette. Mr. Moulton is far better as a poet. He is more meditative than Mr. Golding; and his work maintains a much steadier level of excellence:—

"This cool quiet of trees
In the grey dusk of the North,
In the green half-dusk of the West,
Where fires still glow;
These glimmering fantasies
Of foliage branching forth
And drooping into rest;
Ye lovers, know
That in your wanderings
Beneath this arching brake
Ye must attune your love
To hushed words.
For here is the dreaming wisdom of
The immovable things . . .
And more:—walk softly, lest ye wake
A thousand sleeping birds."

That is a beautiful poem, in its picture and in its gentle sounds. All Mr. Moulton's verse is clearly the outcome of strong emotion, whether he writes of happy or of sad things. "Down here the hawthorn" paints a rapturous spring landscape; "Truly he hath a sweet bed" is a moving dirge, sombre and melodious.

"The brown earth holds him.
The stars and little winds, the friendly moon
And sun attend in turn his rest.
They linger above him, softly moving. They are gracious
His new kindred . . ."

The sort of poem we hope Mr. Moulton will not write often is the sort that speaks of "great mother-breasted moors" that "suckle the clutching heather-buds." The Brobdingnagian vision that such lines call up is not invigorating but nauseous. It is a completely false use of imagery.

ALL SORTS.

"A Fool in Her Folly." By RHODA BROUGHTON. (Odhams. 8s. net.)

"In the Mountains." ANON. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d. net.)

"The Blind Marksman." By EDITH MARY MOORE. (Hodder & Stoughton. 7s. 6d. net.)

"The Amateur." By CHARLES G. NORRIS. (Constable. 8s. 6d. net.)

"Swift Lightning." By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD. (Hodder & Stoughton. 8s. 6d. net.)

IN Mrs. Belloc Lowndes's pleasant appreciation of Rhoda Broughton—the present book is her last—she quotes a modern critic's comparison of her with Jane Austen. The first hundred pages of "A Fool in Her Folly" are undoubtedly of that vintage; it is when the fool is banished her parents' home for the burning loves of Fulke and Eleonora (whose calorific passion is finally consumed in the kitchen grate) that Jane Austen takes her leave after a stay whose welcome treads too closely on farewell. The fool is a Victorian miss, whose giddy head has been turned by the lovers in her innocent father's library to compose a tale of torrid yearning herself, all cooked out of her inner consciousness. The awful discovery of this "pestilent balderdash" is followed by exile to Aunt Florinda, on the author's refusal to renounce the fearful joys, the sweet torments of the creative imagination. The opening chapters are done to perfection with a sympathy, wit, and gaiety in the best traditions of English comedy. The brilliance and character of these delightful pages, combined with the freshness, ease, and grace of the workmanship, are indeed an extraordinary relief after the mechanics of so much modern fiction, and make us feel the loss of Rhoda Broughton more than a folio of appreciations. But, alas, the dashing youth of the novel is cut off in its prime and a numbing unreality sets in of which we are too conscious after this fine whetting to our spirits. Aunt Florinda, whose benevolence extends to a fond tolerance of, even partiality for, being gulled, is indeed a charmer, but the fool's affair with the wooden Don Juan, Bill Drinkwater, her disillusionment and the death of all her vitality and adventurousness (it is difficult to see the author's meaning, when Charlotte, who tells her own story, had had quite innocent relations with the perfidious Bill and had loved him only in her excited imagination) leaves us both perplexed and indifferent. The

In this Work Mr. Wells has done More for the Good of Europe than all the activities of practical Politicians In a generation.

THE NATION says: (reviewing Mr. H. G. Wells' "Outline of History")

"As a supplement, or as an alternative to the narrow racial textbooks, filled with lies and hates and anger of dead controversies, written in the interest of a sect or creed or for the destruction of a sect or creed, Mr. Wells is endeavouring to tell, without prejudice or passion, the story of the human race. It is a great enterprise, undertaken in a spirit of vision and desire. For to him the history of all mankind is as was once the history of one little Eastern People. Humanity is the Chosen Race; and the Record of it is the Word of God. . . . That this enterprise is worth attempting all will admit who see folly triumphant through the lack of it. That Mr. Wells will succeed must be the hope of all who admire sincerity and devotion to an impersonal ideal. . . . He wants to produce a real 'gospel,' deriving from truthful narrative of what has happened the incentive to effort for better things to come. . . . The first section of Mr. Wells' history of the universe brings home, even to those familiar with the facts, the heavy challenge. . . . 'What is it all but the trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns?' It is . . . interesting to see . . . the author advance . . . from this first numbing conviction of man's infinite littleness and unimportance, to some appeal which will not only satisfy the intellect but also kindle emotion and discipline the will. . . . We finish the last of this history with a profound sense of wonder, respect, and gratitude. ONE MAN—with due regard to several important collaborators—one man wrote this history. . . . But there is nobody alive able to criticise all its evidence arguments, and references. That chapter where the matter is what is most familiar to the reader is exactly where he finds Mr. Wells' appreciation of the authorities, his knowledge of the latest discoveries, his really uncanny prescience for the significant facts, no matter how obscure . . . and his literary facility for easy, lucid, and provocative generalisation, commend the whole work. . . . Anyone reading this history will not only have his interest awakened in many phrases of man's intellectual, social, and economic evolution, but, probably for the first time, will realise that his own welfare is bound with that of all mankind, and that events, say in China, must surely react on him, for good or ill. . . . Our candid belief is that, in this work, Mr. Wells has done more for the good of Europe than all the activities of practical politicians have accomplished in a generation . . . to reveal to us the truth of mankind's common history, its common interest, the need to realise a common cause, or the certainty of a common disaster if that common cause does not inspire us . . . the last chapter is by way of helping man, dazed and still drunk and bloody, to rise out of the gutter again, and to keep out of it in the future. . . ."

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says:

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you think, reader, but this
is just what I should like
my boy to be taught. . . ."

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"If an Englishman, for instance, has found the History of England quite enough for his powers, then it seems hopeless to expect his sons and daughters to master universal history, if it is to consist of the history of England, plus the history of France, plus the history of Germany, plus the history of Russia, and so on. To which the answer is—that universal history is at once something more and something less than the aggregate of the national histories to which we are accustomed; that it must be approached in a different spirit and dealt with in a different manner. This book seeks to justify that answer. It has been written primarily to show that history as a whole is amenable to a more broad and comprehensible handling than is the history of special nations and periods; a broader handling that will bring it within the normal limitations of time and energy set to the reading and education of an ordinary citizen. This history deals with ages and races and nations, where the ordinary history deals with reigns and pedigrees and campaigns; but it will not be found to be more crowded with names and dates: nor more difficult to follow. History is no exception among the sciences; as the gaps fill in, the outline simplifies; as the outline broadens, the clustering multitude of details dissolves into general laws. And many topics of general interest—the first appearance and the growth of scientific knowledge, for example . . . the elaboration of the ideas of money and of credit, . . . which must be treated fragmentarily in any partial history, arise and flow completely and naturally in one general record of the world in which we live."

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latter part of the book nearly loses continuity with the earlier, a delicate and triumphant satire upon the divorce between art and life, between reality and its gaudy literary image, for the deceiving of Charlotte by a villain as much pasteboard as Fulke and Eleonora is a tame and rather futile commonplace. Still, the double satire on literary vanity and Victorian maladroitness and lack of insight in dealing with an uncommon and reprehended situation is more than worth the laboriousness of its sequel. At her best, Rhoda Broughton was in the front rank of novelists for tragi-comedy, which she could achieve with a sensibility, wit, and style in which she had few equals.

The anonymous author of "In the Mountains" has written a charming and objective little comedy with an undertone of light satire less brilliant than "A Fool in Her Folly," but much more sustained. It is in diary form, and the narrator has retired to Switzerland to nurse a despairing heart at the loss of her relatives in the war. There Mrs. Jewks and Mrs. Barnes, her elder sister, come upon her, and Mrs. Barnes is not at all anxious for anybody to know that Mrs. Jewks is really Frau Juchs, and before Frau Juchs had been Frau Bretterstangel, Herr Juchs's nephew. Wedlock to Dolly is like a white shirt to a waiter, a habit, a routine, a placid necessity, and had she not married the Germans, she would, in default of more eligible suitors, have married half a dozen head hunters. To them the Dean, the diarist's uncle, a patriot of acute convictions and an instant victim to Dolly's marriageability, with comical but happy results. The book is by no means so slight as this outline suggests. The two sisters are sketched not only with considerable skill but with a genuine eye for character, and the unobtrusive way in which the teller of the story is healed of her grievous wounds by her attention to and interest in the very human people who invade her solitude is quite masterly. Altogether it is a very accomplished comedy, touched with a light hand but with real wisdom and perception behind it.

Mrs. Moore, a serious and high-minded writer of distinction, is hardly at her best in "The Blind Marksman," the story of a frustrated idealist, Jane Arrobis, married to a well-meaning clod, and missing both her natural mate and the fulfilment of her spirit. The book is written with painful solemnity, and Mrs. Moore's persistent use of such jargon as "phenomenal imperceptivity," "her mind moved kinetoscopically," and of the catchwords of the amateur psychologist, gives us a surprising impression of her as a raw enthusiast of letters with a very imperfect command of her instrument. In spite of her general enlightenment and much weighty thinking, the author does no kind of justice to herself in her latest book, and is plainly encumbered by her ambitious material. How odd it is that Jane Arrobis, a familiar figure of modern life and developed with the utmost pains to secure verisimilitude, should fade in an instant to nothingness before the fantastic sketch of Dolly Juchs in "In the Mountains," who is as real to us as our consciousness that we are never likely to meet such a person in the flesh!

Carey Williams is "The Amateur," an erratic youth who makes his fortune in New York by drawing conventional designs for magazines, dissipates it all on a musical comedy happy, and creeps out of hospital, poverty, and repentance into the waiting arms of Jane Boardman, an abiding lighthouse which has guided many other battered yachts besides Carcy to the recuperative shore—in many other novels. The moral is that virtue is the best business speculation, and that you cannot go to the bad without a hole in your pocket.

"Swift Lightning" is a great Dane with wolf's blood in him, who returns to civilization after a career of dissipation with the packs. It is needless to point out that this style of book would never have been written but for Kipling, and the best that can be said for Mr. Curwood is that he imitates with some native pictorial energy. Anthropomorphism, of course, is what is wrong with all these books; their authors endow their beasts with what they conceive to be the emotions and actions of primitive men, forgetting that beasts often behave like human beings, not because they are human, but because the spirit that moves us to behave like men is the identical spirit which moves beasts to behave like beasts. The confusion is between the spirit and its appropriate expressions, and the beast that is like itself justifies its existence as the beast that caricatures man can never do.

THE BOOKSHOP AT CHRISTMAS.

It was said recently by G. B. S. that we should never give to a child a book that we ourselves would not read. When first thinking that over we were inclined to murmur some wild variants of it, such as, "We should never ask a child to do what we ourselves would not do"; *e.g.*, keep its little nose clean. "We should never act in a way in which we should not expect children to act." And so on. It would be a delightfully easy way of filling the columns of a review of Christmas gift books for children to continue playing with such a controversial dictum of Shaw's. But, surveying the mass of volumes waiting for immediate tribute, this reviewer realizes with a groan that it would not do. It might prove annoying to a number of people. G. B. S. has no place here. It is almost certain he would never read those books. Probably, when a child, he never saw anything like them. It is a vagrant speculation whether in the dozens of those volumes there are more than three he would give to a child. Even while prepared ourselves to defend his dictum, we are bound to inform him that it is with difficulty that we can get hold of the volumes in the process of reviewing them—for some children, who happen to be present, insist on reading them. And the joke is, the volumes they select appear to be those we should not read ourselves, even for the purpose of reviewing them. Wili G. B. S. advise us what to do about that?

The truth is, children are omnivorous with books. They will devour anything. The same boy will read "Dick Turpin," Dickens, Jules Verne, Darwin's "Voyage," Macaulay's "Lays," the "Weekly Pugilist," Wells's "Outline of History," Milton, and the newspaper, with equal gusto. That is why we should not give a child a book we ourselves would not read. He will get it, anyway. But there is this to be said for many of these expensive gift books: some trouble has been taken in illustrating, printing, and binding them. We may disagree with the selection of type, the kind of paper, and the method of binding, but what is valuable is the recognition of the essential importance of a book. It is right that children should attach as much value to a book as Washington instinctively recognized in the apple tree as soon as he saw his father coming through the orchard. It will be time enough when the child comes to the age of discretion for it to recognize that all are not books that are sumptuously bound; for we may hope forlornly to cultivate such a mass of acute criticism of letters that in time it will be unprofitable to present rubbish, however disguised, and a matter of course that all books should be given a delightful appearance. We like the idea that gift books for children, even when they do not fulfil Shaw's stipulation, should be a brave show. At least they teach children that we attach as much consequence to books as we do to the polish on the furniture.

As an excellent example, here is the Medici Society's presentation of Malory's "Morte d'Arthur," published in two volumes at two guineas, and illustrated by W. Russell Flint, R.W.S. In this case there is no doubt of any kind. Such beautiful volumes, of a book, too, the memory of which will carry far, should set for intelligent adolescence a standard in printing, decoration, and binding that ought to make it harder for what is cheap and nasty, and what is merely expensive and pretentious, to deceive them later. Whatever books we may select for children, most decidedly we should never give them print and binding we would not admire on our own shelves. They ought to be taught that the work of authors deserves the attention of the cleverest craftsmen. That is the way to get them to see whether the authors really deserve it.

We are pleased, too, with "Tristram and Isoude" (Harrap, 21s.). This is a piece of bookwork delightful merely to examine. It represents, in a measure, an illuminated text, putting the legend in an appropriate setting. A book should draw out a child's curiosity on as many sides as possible, and Evelyn Paul's decorations to her own excellent rendering out of the Romance of Robert de Bouon (her fine prose exposes the shoddiness of current speech) would at once make a child's world more wonderful.

We wish to commend "Reynard the Fox," by C. S. Evans, illustrated by L. R. Brightwell (Evans, 10s. 6d.), for another reason. It is not an expensive book, but the wisdom of the

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old story is illustrated with pictures of its characters which ought to establish a reputation for the artist. We have not seen such humorous representations of animals since J. A. Shepherd gave even rhinoceroses a fraternal aspect of human weaknesses. But Shepherd erred, latterly, on the side of the grotesque. Mr. Brightwell's creatures are not caricatures. His bear, lions, fox, wolf, tiger, and the rest, might illustrate a good natural history; but by some deft touch he can give any of them the human expression which the story requires. There is a suggestion of hauteur, stupidity, and interest without knowledge, in the look of the Lioness as she sits beside her consort, which is irresistible, and is all that Mr. Brightwell requires as evidence that he must move in the best circles. The Laughing Jackass making a ribald comment to a cockatoo, can almost be overheard. Bruin might be Mr. Bonar Law when a half-comprehension of the truth, and the idea that there may be a necessity to state its opposite, come to him together just before he opens his mouth to speak. This is a happy book, and we want it be clear that we should not give it away, even to a child, simply because we did not want it ourselves. As another volume of well retold old tales, Messrs. Tuck have sent "Children's Stories from Old British Legends," by Dorothy Belgrave and Hilda Hart, who have well and simply given some of the best known legends of twilight Britain.

It would make it easier for the reviewers of Christmas books if more of the publishers would give commissions to such artists as James Stephens when they want original stories written for children. His book is called "Irish Fairy Tales" (Macmillan, 15s.), and it is illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Now, before this reviewer had time to read it, it was placed where a girl of ten might or might not do some of his work for him. She reported briefly in one sincere word, "lovely." And probably Mr. Stephens now wants no word of ours. What would ours matter? But may we quote what the Ulster gentleman did when Finnian, the Abbot of Moville, called on him about God? The gentleman refused admittance to Finnian. "He barricaded his house, he shuttered his windows, and in a gloom of indignation and protest he continued the practices of ten thousand years, and would not hearken to Finnian calling at his window or to Time knocking at his door." What happened to the Ulster gentleman (who really was a gentleman) must be discovered.

In these dark days of the world when our governors and great men think it needful to barricade themselves from the people they love with bullet-proof palisades, with a sigh we can reconcile ourselves to such unhappy times by remembering that, after all, there are with us some inconsequential recompenses, such as Walter de la Mare, who can make words that even innocents at once recognize as magic. Our luck is not altogether out when we can give a child "Peacock Pie" (Constable, 12s. 6d.), by a poet who is with us. There is nothing to be said here about "Peacock Pie," except that, whether children or not, if we do not know Walter de la Mare's poetry then it is time we did. This special edition is illustrated by W. Heath Robinson. The same publishers give us "A Child's Day," a book of rhymes by the same poet, illustrated by the kind of pictures of children by Carine and Will Cadby which for long have been the pleasure and the despair of other eminent photographers.

There are plenty of books of fairy tales to choose from. Indeed, the pile seems greater this year than ever, as though there had been an instinctive impulse at work to find any sort of imaginary world in which children might take refuge from the awful facts of this. As a companion to "Cinderella," which was a very pleasing volume, Arthur Rackham has illustrated with silhouette drawings "The Sleeping Beauty" (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.). We think this number contains some of his happiest efforts this year to illustrate for children a world outside this. And he seems to have been very busy, too, this year. He has made a number of drawings for "Snowdrop," and other tales of the Brothers Grimm (Constable, 17s. 6d.), and, for the same publisher, for "Hansel and Gretel." Some of the pictures in the latter book are quite convincing of the reality of these shadows out of the twilight of the folk of the Northland.

A selection of "Polish Fairy Tales" (Lane, 16s.), translated by Maude Biggs from Glinski's collection printed in Wilna in 1862, and obviously legends of great antiquity, are very pleasing. They make no noticeable break from the

Germanic folk tales, a fact in itself of considerable interest. The illustrations in colors by Cecile Walton deserve special mention. Some of the pictures of this artist suggest a strangeness of light which is what we ought to expect in pictures of what is fair, but rarely get. The same publishers have sent us "Bengal Fairy Tales" (15s.), collected by F. B. Bradley-Birt in the villages and bazaars of that province. They have six illustrations in color by Abanindranath Tagore.

To search through English poetry for verses about the fairies was an excursion in quite new country for Dora Owen, who has made of it an excellent anthology, "The Book of Fairy Poetry" (Longmans, 21s.). The volume is divided into three parts: Fairy stories, Fairy songs, dances, and talk, and Fairyland and its lore. Each part is in chronological order. This book is as likely to keep the elders engaged as the children; and as its editor justly says, any child reading it will be made familiar with some of our greatest poets, and with others who deserve not to be forgotten, but who, from the reminder of some of the unfamiliar examples the anthologist gives, have been clean forgotten by many of us. We wish the book had been in smaller compass, for it is not fairy-like to hold for any length of time, but as probably it was designed to lie upon the hearth rug, where its youthful reader will be full length, its size perhaps cannot be properly criticized by a reviewer who long ago had to surrender that freedom while reading.

When mentioning James Stephens's Irish stories, and regretting that publishers do not more often give such work to such writers, it was not forgetfulness, but a sense that perhaps to-day it might be some breach of D.O.R.A. and an illegal assembly to couple together the names of two Irishmen, which made us keep till this place "The King of Ireland's Son," by Padraic Colum (Harrap), which is illustrated by Willy Pogány. There is no disputing that there is something in these old tales by Irishmen which makes the same sort of work by English writers look rather—British. They may not believe in the fairies, these Irish; they may, and probably do, keep the tongue in the cheek when talking to such as we are about the other world. Anyhow, in their free abandonment of realities—unless they happen to want them—their direct and casual confidence in the support of the rainbow, their contempt for the limitations of time and space, the perfectly natural and confidential manner of the talk of their "other folk," and their gravity when making sly hints to dull wits, convince us that for us to suppose we can do as we like with such people is just what those would think who would stroll across Pook's Hill on Midsummer Eve in hob-nailed boots without knowing what they were walking upon. If we could say any more for Padraic Colum's book we would. He can make you believe in the enchanters.

There is an edition of Gulliver for children (Heinemann, 12s. 6d.) made noteworthy with illustrations by Jean de Bosschère, but, like all editions of Gulliver for children, made still more noteworthy because of its grave omissions. We are inclined to agree here with G. B. S., and to declare that Swift is a "moral" writer, that there is no grossness in Gulliver's travels to hide, that his prose is wonderful in its force and beauty, and that no child could come to any harm through reading Gulliver as admiring critics know him. Obviously, no child could possibly catch the intent of all the glints and flashes in the play of Swift's matchless polemical English. But what does that matter?

Among the other volumes designed as gifts for children mention must be made of Sir Henry Newbolt's annual contribution, "The Book of Good Hunting" (Longmans, 10s. 6d.). It would be idle to deny that we never took a consuming interest in the tales of big-game hunting; or even that we are now past that time. Most boys, in any case, become lost at once in such tales. But Sir Henry's prefatory effort to explain why it is right to kill some animals for sport (if, for example, you happen to have the money to follow the hounds after red-deer on Exmoor), but that it is entirely wrong and cruel to course rabbits, if you are a working man and cannot afford "the noblest sport in England," had such a loud snuffle that it drowned the roar of the lions when we came to them later in the book.

There is "The Children's Life of the Bee," selected and arranged from Maeterlinck by Alfred Sutro and Herchel Williams, and finely illustrated by E. J. Detmold (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.) which merits attention on the Christmas

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book-shelf. So does "Habits and Characters of British Wild Animals," by H. Mortimer Batten (Chambers, 21s.). This book is very well written indeed, and is full of such original and interesting observations that most practised field naturalists would get hints from it. "Insect Adventures," selections from Fabre retold for young people (Hodder & Stoughton, 8s. 6d.), would serve as an excellent introduction to that great French naturalist.

For the juniors we can recommend an excellent story by Christine Chaundler, "The Thirteenth Orphan" (Nisbet, 6s.), no small part of the charm of which are Honor Appleton's illustrations; the "Enchanted Forest," by Violet Brady (Milford, 3s. 6d.); "More Plants we Play With," by H. R. Robinson (Wells, Gardner, 7s. 6d.); "The Gentle Heritage," by Frances E. Crompton (Ward, Lock, 5s.); Blackie's "Little Ones' Book" of Stories, Verse, and Pictures (3s. 6d.); an absurdity in which children seem to delight, "The Five Bad Chunkies" (Humphrey Milford, 6s.); "Farm-yard Ditties," by M. and C. T. Nightingale (Blackwell, 3s.); the "Adventure of Dolly Dingle," by May Wynne, illustrated pleasingly by Florence Anderson (Jarrolds, 3s. 6d.); and "Shoes," by J. H. Benthams (Duckworth, 5s.); "The Password to Fairyland," by Elizabeth Southwart, with drawings by Florence Mary Anderson (Simpkin, 15s.); and an attractive anthology of recent poetry, "The Tear's at the Spring," compiled by L. D'O. Walters (Harrap).

BOYS AFTER THE WAR.

- "The Luck of the Gold Moidore." By DONALD MACLEAN. (Allenson, 7s. 6d.)
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 "Mother and Dad and the Rest of Us." By ARCHIE FAIRFAX. (Blackie, 6s.)
 "The Merchant at Arms." By R. OAKESHOTT. (Longmans, 7s. 6d.)

We do not take it as a concession to our weary protests during the past few years that writers for boys are turning from the excitement and the fun of trenches and poison gas to the ancient inspirations; but it is significant that in this batch of Christmas books only one (and that one addressed to the younger youngsters!) is concerned with the Great Struggle. Even the exception deals with the Thing as a calamity, and not as a jolly event specially created to give the boys a chance to indulge their animal spirits in a spacious way.

At last we have dipped into the old excitements. It was better than tales of the Bosche (with a "c"); still, we won through a little puzzled. The writing of boys' books must be the most difficult of all the arts. The story so seldom "comes off" without reminding us of a day when there was something better. Or are we sophisticated, and boys uncritical? We do not believe it. Surely, when we go down to the sea again and board the tall ships John Silver's is not the only call we shall hear. Did Stevenson's genius exhaust the adventures of sea-roving? How much we owe him! Has the sea no other treasures than Flint's, and must all mutineers talk like the terrible one-legged cook?

Mr. Masfield, in "Lost Endeavor," paid the master the compliment of discovering a completely new kind of treasure-trove, and of presenting a crowd of adventurers distinct and full of character. Here is Mr. Maclean, in "The Luck of the Gold Moidore," giving the boys a story lively enough to keep their undivided attention for hours, but it is not to the advantage of his stagey figures that their talk should send the mind of the young reader scurrying back to those unforgettable men who sailed from Bristol after Flint's "first." One of the leaders of Mr. Maclean's pirates was

a villain named England, who had "more headpiece than all the rest together." He is overheard restraining the foolish from precipitancy. When we read the following there came faintly down the wind a murmur as of voices round a certain apple-barrel:—

"Without this Cary (the captain), and curse him, I say, we might spend the rest of our lives seeking this treasure and spend them in vain. No, there must be no splitting of skulls, at least, not his, for many a day yet. But it was ever thy way, George, to rush in where an ass would have sense enough to stand out and wait. There be men here and on the 'White Ship,' too, that would have been ruffing it in London to-day with the best, with their pockets full of gold pieces, but for that wonderful smartness of thine. . . ."

Yes, it would seem that Stevenson had stolen the whole bag of tricks.

Lady Middleton (who, her publisher tells us, is a granddaughter of the author of "The Old Red Sandstone," although that fact does not affect the story) relates the adventures of a family whose holiday in France was broken up by the war. It is not violently warlike, and Michael is really a likable little boy, although at the evidence of a German atrocity he did break out with: "Damn them! Curse them, and damn them!" The Huns had stabbed a baby to death, which is enough to upset the feelings of any little English boy, especially if he has been listening to the conversation of an airman who assures his friends that "Britons never shall be slaves." Allowances must always be made, for, as Lady Middleton says: "Oh children—you who read this story—you are so safe, have been so all through the time of war! Think if these things had happened to you!"

Mr. Finbarr has a good yarn to tell in "The Strange Adventure of Jack Smith," of a boy whose identity became mixed up with another's. Instead of lolling in the luxuries of his grandfather's mansion he is planted (instead of the other boy) in a prison-like school under a tyrannous master. There are wonderful escapes, tramps with gypsies, and excitements in which Napoleon, Nelson, and some wicked spies are concerned.

"The Wild Unmasked," by Mr. St. Mars, is a book of natural history adventure. This is not the best way of imparting knowledge, but we believe it is a good method of attracting a child's interest in science. We felt thrilled by the story of the triungulin parasite in the wasp's cell.

The Battle of Bosworth Field, and exciting times in London and Antwerp and on the seas between are described in "The Merchant at Arms" by Ronald Oakeshott. The story is a good one, but the telling is imitation antique, and it is hard to convince us that exclamations like "A pox upon my sober judgment" could be justified to readers either young or matured. If the book is not meant for the young, then perhaps those of adult age may get a little amusement out of comic interludes like this:—

"It is the lore you gave me I put in practice, the teaching which shows a man's life is nothing worth if he cannot risk it for a maid. If I turn aside I am a dastard to a faith which I deem holy. I talk like a fool, Walter, but I humbly pray I may act like a man."

It is a pity an excellent plot should be packed and hidden in such pink cotton-wool.

"Mother and Dad and the Rest of Us," being the "first book of Archie Fairfax," is another book of doubtful classification. We are not certain whether to give it to a girl or a young boy. Either would be grateful. Archie at the age of twelve reflects, "It's very odd the way life treats you," but his character sketches of the family are excellently done, and the sentiment is not overloaded.

Mr. Hylton Cleaver can always be trusted to tell a fine school story. It was easy even for a reviewer to be genuinely interested in the series of episodes which proved the good qualities of young Roscoe, who made so unpromising a start. The boys at Harley are engaging, and will keep you amused whatever your age.

There is some distinction of style as well as the excitement of the chase in "The Lost Hunters." The wolves and all the other animals who are defeated by the Sioux Indians are larger than life, but Mr. Altsheler is an artist who knows the valleys and mountains of North-West America, and he convinces.

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- "The Luck of Lois." By E. L. HAVERFIELD. (Milford. 5s.)
- "Laughing Water." By ETHEL TURNER. (Ward, Lock. 5s.)
- "The Merry Five and 'Toronto.'" By EDNA LAKE. (Chambers. 5s.)
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It is so long since we put up our hair that we forget precisely what the emotion was that drove us from the books specially written for us, to read those meant for our brothers, who, we noticed, never seemed keen for our fare. It was not, we are sure, that too much was demanded of our credulity in the world of adventure. Anything was possible but one thing. At this distance of time we are inclined to think it was just the insistence on that one thing that disturbed us. We had no whole-hearted faith in dear little souls who reformed their families and their friends and left their schools better places than they found them. Most of the angels we knew were angular little creatures. The cheek they turned to the smiter did not turn away wrath. They were capable of much affection, but they never demonstrated their devotion by slow suicide, and they mixed some fun with their honesty. It was never clear why there should be one book for the boy and another for the girl, and now, old and hardened and with the experience of this batch of books, we believe firmly that in romances it is a mistake to make distinctions. A good story should be enjoyed by boys and girls alike.

The story could be as wonderful as the cunning of a magician could make it. All we demanded were circumstances in which, under a luckier star, we could conceive ourselves being placed. How would Miss Brazil have affected the girls of so many years ago? There is nothing namby-pamby in her schools, nor does she ask us to believe—at least, in "A Popular Schoolgirl"—that the only purpose of a teacher is to provide a butt for young wits. There are fashions in popular novelists. They have their day and cease to count. Miss Brazil is still the fashion for girls just in their teens, but since (we learn this by asking) she was once loved because of her generous invention of pranks and adventures, and because of the inconsequential defiance of law and order in her heroines, we wonder how long the fashion will last. "A Popular Schoolgirl" (our first experience of Miss Brazil) is a skilfully made book, but for pages the narrative walks ungracefully on the flattest of feet. The girls seem to keep up their own and each other's spirits and to sustain their interest in their exploits only by a frequent use of such epithets as "topping," "ripping," and "Great Minerva! It'll be a hectic evening!" The reader is kept waiting for the hectic business to begin, and it is disappointing to be asked, after such promise, to feel excited about the Rainbow League, a society for schoolgirls who wish to help in the work of post-war reconstruction. One of the principles of the League is that "by conscious radiation of unselfish love to her fellow-beings a girl may raise the moral atmosphere of the world around her." Throughout the story the girls are consciously radiating. As a concession to readers who want the spice of excitement, there is the saving of Bess from a savage horse by the indomitable Ingrid Saxon. Ingrid has a sister named Quenrede, and brothers who bear without flinching the names of Egbert, Athelstane, and Hereward.

Miss May Wynne is an author of another kind. Her style reminds us of something long ago. Do you remember when your mind was so saturated with the stories of the "G. O. P." and the "B. O. P." that you felt impelled to create something yourself, and did not the romance begin like this?—

"Alec's cheer rang out over the prairie as he reined in his horse, watching the slender figure of his sister Nellie, as, leaning forward in her saddle, she flung the lasso skilfully over the horns of a young bullock which had broken away from the herd and was galloping away over the scrub towards the river."

This is how the "Adventures of Two" begins, and the

style and the excitement are maintained throughout the story of how Nellie and her twin sister Jane, gripping their rifles, set out to rescue Alec from the Indians, each resolved "to forget herself and think only of her brother's peril." As the author concludes, "How wonderful it all is!"

We like the girls so much in "The Twins of Castle Charming" that we overlook the improbabilities of the story; indeed, it is possible to admire the courage of Miss Oxenham for ignoring the probabilities in so large a way. The birth of the twins causes their mother's death, and the father, stricken by the loss of his beloved—do you know what is coming?—cannot tolerate the children's presence. Novel writers should arise and call that father's name blessed, for he has been good to them. Melany, who is dark like her Italian mother, and Blanche, who is fair like her English father, are brought up by relatives, Melany in England, Blanche in Italy. They have never seen each other, but, though mountains and seas divide them, they long for one another and for their father in his Castle Charming in Switzerland. Melany escapes from the custody of her guardians and sets out in quest of her father. She discovers her sister—who had started out on the same errand at the same time—asleep in a field in Switzerland. Together they storm Castle Charming and conquer the heart of their father.

The improbabilities of "The Mystery of Barwood Hall" are on a smaller scale. It has the further advantage of being the work of a skilful artist. The brother and sister who have the luck to stay in the great house, with its dark panelling, its oil paintings, suits of armor and locked rooms, are high-spirited, recognizable little beings, who harbor a hunted suffragette and solve the mystery of the house, which Miss Fowell keeps well concealed to nearly the end of a long story.

Miss Haverfield has plenty of invention, but the dialogue of her schoolgirls lacks life. There is no plot to hold the reader's attention in "The Luck of Lois." It is a story of the cattishness of Vivian (she was "frightfully up" in the National Gallery and places like that, and "simply adored" the British Museum) and of Zoe (like Vivian, "a spoilt child of fortune"), the angelic conduct of Vivian's long-suffering sister Lois, and of the unfolding of the real character of Ann. At first Ann is a baffling Miss. She is in the school, but not of it, though her mother is its mistress. She is made of that material which has been the sole fortune of some great men, the strong, silent stuff. She is the Cat that Walked Alone. But she proves her quality by saving Lois from the sea and declining thanks. Lois responds by saving Ann from fire.

Miss Ethel Turner's Australian stories have a reputation. "Laughing Water" is something like a return to the method of story telling which earned a name for Mrs. Gaskell. The characters are believable, there is respect for the dignity of language—and there is a generous thought, too, for those who enjoy a lump in the throat while reading.

The kiddies in Miss Lake's book are inclined to walk on stilts, but they are not above an occasional frolic. They read the "Materia Medica," and spend their half holidays collecting herbs for a mysterious lady in the village. We like best the younger sister, who is something of a pickle, and we quite agree with her rebuke to her brother that he talks as if he is at least thirty-five. The story is exciting enough. It tells how the father, who was reported drowned when his ship was torpedoed, was restored to his family, and of the clever trapping of a spy.

If you enjoy a good cry, then it might be as well to buy a large handkerchief when purchasing "The Treasure House." It is not for the very young, though what is the right age for enjoying this kind of love story we are too old to say. "Great Expectations" served Miss Whiting a good turn. There is a mysterious old lady who shuts herself up from the world. She is impelled to tell her secret to someone, but it must be to one who has youth, and "youth touched with sorrow." So she decides upon Hildred, who, we thought, had trouble enough of her own. Hildred is an orphan who lives with an unfeeling cousin and is in everyone's way. She inherits the mysterious old lady's fortune, only to lose it again in a way we cannot but feel was highly ridiculous. The loss of that treasure, however, led to the finding of another, for everything is made right by the young man with a kindly smile, which was like sunshine to Hildred in her loneliness. In finding the treasure of Rex's love, O! little reader, she "found the best that life can give."

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